

Workforce Observations

For The North Central WDA

October, 2002



Unemployment Rate Dip Belies Job Loss Everywhere

The rate of unemployment fell in each of the nine counties of the Upper Wisconsin River District in the month of September, which mirrored the situation at both the state and national levels. This may seem like an odd direction for the unemployment rate to go for an early fall month, when we are supposed to be looking at some job loss here and there, based mainly on seasonal factors. But in fact there have been job *losses* in six counties of the district in September compared to the previous month (although compared to the same period of 12 months ago, there were some healthy increase in several areas of the district) and it must be said that in counties where there were job gains compared to August, they were lackluster, to say the least.

The decline in the monthly rate is not necessarily connected to job gain, but to changes in the size of the labor force. Since the unemployment rate is the percentage of unemployed people in the labor force at any given time, drops in the rate may not mean job increases, but only that the labor force has changed in size. And of course, this can happen either way, where an increase in the rate may not mean greater joblessness, as has occurred a few times in the last two or three years. This appears to be what has happened in the most recent month—a “false” reading based on some changes in the size of the labor force compared to the previous month, and not more jobs.

As the fall truly begins and we mentally prepare for the colder weather ahead, what possible changes can be seen on the labor market in the months to come throughout the district?

The Winter Job Season Makes It's Tentative Approach

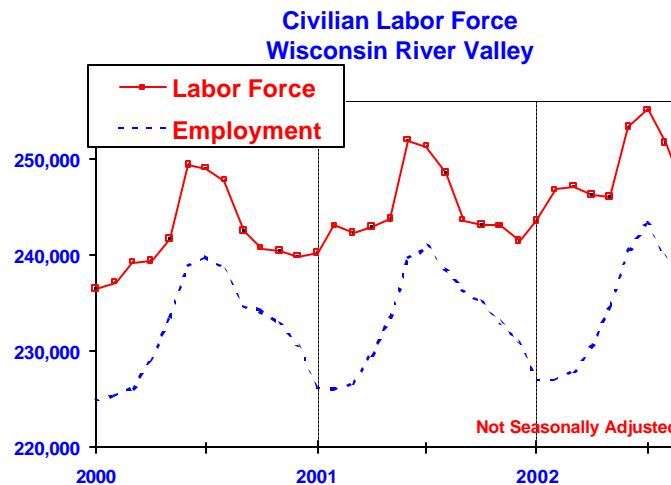
As mentioned, there were some declines in the number of jobs in a few areas around the River Valley District,

but considering the number of jobs lost and the time of the year, there does not seem to be any need to worry. The numbers are fairly small compared to the total working in the River Valley (over a quarter of a million).

So much for the number of people in or out of the labor force. When taking a glance at the main industrial sectors in September, what can we see compared to either August,

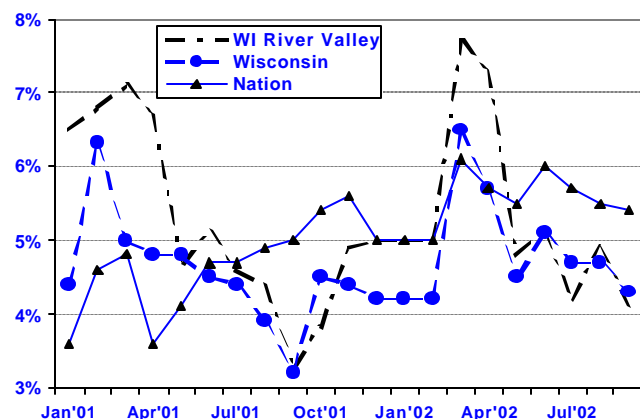
or to September of last year? There were job declines in every industry compared to the previous month. Manufacturing, which has had a rather shaky time of it over the last year, not only locally but throughout the state and the region, slipped a little by about 700 jobs. Losses were almost equally spread between durable and nondurable goods manufacturing. In the latter category, we expect to see some seasonal decline, of course, as some of the food processing and related businesses begin to slow up with the approach of the season's end. Paper manufacturing, which belongs to the nondurable sector, is holding it's own at this time, against a background of more possible layoffs in the Wood—Portage County areas at the Stora-Enso operation.

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**The Unemployment Rate
Most Recent Month - Sept '02**



*Please visit the Marathon County Job Center Website!
We are presently housed at a temporary location at Tripod and
can be found at this addie—
<http://freelmi.tripod.com/maracent.html>*

As far as manufacturing in concerned, job losses compared to the previous month were only about a third as big as when compared to the same period of 12 months ago. September 2002 manufacturing numbers were down by over 2,500 jobs over the year. But, in a field of over 43, 000, this is not a lot (assuming, of course, you are one of the 2,500).

Both service and trade fell a bit from August, but in contrast to manufacturing, were higher than 2001. In the Northern counties during the same pe-

riod there were healthy gains in trade and service, with the added employment almost equally spread over both sectors (approximately 250-300 jobs in each). At this point, it appears that the tourist season of the past summer was a successful one, with both the economy and the weather cooperating to assure busy weekends. Although the labor shortage has abated a bit in the face of current economic conditions, many guest workers from abroad were seen once again this summer in the shops and resorts of the Pineries



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http://www.wis.gov.state.wi.us/build_wis.asp

Month of September	Adams	Forest	Lang.	Lincoln	Mara.	Oneida	Portage	Vilas	Wood	Region
Labor Force	9,162	5,139	9,591	14,774	76,907	23,294	38,428	12,510	41,672	231,477
Employed	8,836	4,828	8,905	13,946	73,957	22,116	36,575	12,165	39,420	220,748
Unemployed	326	311	686	828	2,950	1,178	1,853	345	2,252	10,729
Unemployment rate(%)	3.6	6.1	7.2	5.6	3.8	5.1	4.8	2.8	5.4	4.6%
Total, all industries**	4,434	3,517	8,008	12,139	70,559	18,396	33,902	9,090	45,502	205,547
Construction & Mining	200	120	369	359	2,760	1,523	1,082	976	1,688	9,077
Manufacturing	433	457	1,633	3,834	18,047	1,764	6,678	468	9,546	42,860
Transportation & Util.	200	246	431	453	4,229	677	2,066	227	3,375	11,904
Wholesale Trade	126	38	340	401	5,512	546	1,466	251	1,478	10,158
Retail Trade	843	527	1,811	2,267	13,499	5,265	6,212	2,668	8,121	41,213
FIRE	96	104	266	740	4,711	463	3,585	299	953	11,217
Services	1,291	472	1,971	1,983	14,128	5,508	7,253	2,042	15,041	49,689
Government	1,245	1,553	1,187	2,102	7,673	2,650	5,560	2,159	5,300	29,429
Change from previous mo.	Adams	Forest	Lang.	Lincoln	Mara.	Oneida	Portage	Vilas	Wood	Region
Civilian Labor Force*	253	127	-6	334	1,109	1,646	-90	881	353	4,607
Employed	211	60	-116	158	713	1,520	-621	835	-149	2,611
Unemployed	42	67	110	176	396	126	531	46	502	1,996
Unemployment rate(%)	0.4	1.2	1.2	1.1	0.4	0.2	1.4	0.2	1.2	0.1
Total, all industries**	-61	128	128	-34	-127	-850	960	-874	615	-115
Construction & Mining	-11	-12	-12	-42	-114	-41	-47	-36	-12	-327
Manufacturing	4	-16	-16	-27	-359	-59	-117	4	-146	-732
Transportation & Util.	-7	52	52	24	45	33	18	15	96	328
Wholesale Trade	-4	-9	-9	1	26	-10	-21	-10	-2	-38
Retail Trade	-44	-32	-32	-45	-185	-310	255	-260	174	-479
FIRE	-2	1	1	-10	-43	4	-18	-3	-18	-88
Services	-127	-57	-57	-5	-238	-655	-48	-609	-73	-1,869
Government	130	201	201	70	741	188	938	25	596	3,090
Change from year ago	Adams	Forest	Lang.	Lincoln	Mara.	Oneida	Portage	Vilas	Wood	Region
Civilian Labor Force*	895	602	-97	273	1,412	2,164	756	936	527	7,468
Employed	828	448	-244	-63	399	1,582	-92	870	-495	3,233
Unemployed	67	154	147	336	1,013	582	848	66	1,022	4,235
Unemployment rate(%)	0.5	2.6	1.6	2.2	1.2	2.3	2.1	0.4	2.4	0.1
Total, all industries**	330	281	-53	-206	-168	-491	508	398	-435	164
Construction & Mining	8	-9	-115	-266	-890	86	-242	-91	-331	-1,850
Manufacturing	41	-47	-93	-309	-947	-439	-167	-77	-529	-2,567
Transportation & Util.	23	32	33	26	200	-4	119	-37	65	457
Wholesale Trade	14	-3	-121	-20	361	152	-155	109	47	384
Retail Trade	-48	21	-67	-112	1,459	-24	734	359	-153	2,169
FIRE	-4	8	3	486	-114	-9	-89	-16	42	307
Services	279	-29	344	60	-111	-128	-209	-13	664	857
Government	17	308	-37	-71	-126	-125	517	164	-240	407

* Includes participants residing in area. ** Includes employment with employers located in area. Estimates are NOT seasonally adjusted. Current month estimates are preliminary. Totals may not add due to rounding. Calculations based on unrounded numbers.

Look for the most current Labor Market Information at: WWW.DWD.STATE.WI.US/LMI
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